

Feel the Magic of Music in Ningbo

By Dong Na

Recently, Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 7 was performed by the Ningbo Symphony Orchestra for the first time at the Ningbo Grand Theater, under the baton of famous conductor Tan Lihua.

"Anyone who has been at the concert tonight can proudly say that they have witnessed a milestone event in the development of Ningbo's fine arts," said He Qiufan, a columnist for the magazine *Philharmonic*.

A Feast of Fine Art

The evening's performance started with the *Carnival Overture*, full of joy and vitality, which was followed by *Slavonic Dances* No. 1, 2, 7, and 8. Tan Lihua's elegant and superb conducting style, paired with the orchestra's impeccable skill, brought the unique artistic charm of Dvorak's masterpieces to life and captivated the audience of over a thousand.

Dvorak was one of the first Czech composers to achieve worldwide recognition and a prominent figure in the nationalist movements of 19th- and early 20th-century music. Dvorak's position in the Czech Republic is equivalent to Tchaikovsky's in Russia.

Symphony No. 7 is Dvorak's most important work, a tribute to his mentor Johannes Brahms. He poured his heart and soul into the composition, which was completed in 1885 and first performed under his own baton in the same year.

Tan Lihua is one of the most famous conductors in the international and Chinese orchestral music scene. He has been invited to conduct dozens of celebrated orchestras around the world, such as the Russian National Symphony Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Tan devotes his life to the research and popularization of Dvorak's works.

"Dvorak's symphony has a distinctively heroic and patriotic theme. The rhythm is simple and clear, and the melody is relaxed and pleasant. His works gives listeners a sense of innocence and beauty," Tan said.

Musicians' Ideas on Ningbo's Transformation

7,000 years ago, China's oldest musical instrument, the *Xun* (pottery vessel flute) was invented by our Hemudu ancestors. In 1929, Zhao Meibo from Ningbo became China's first singer to study vocal music abroad in Europe. In 1942, the first upright piano produced in China by Chinese people was made by Lin Bingyan from Ningbo. For centuries, Ningbo people have never wavered in our pursuit of music.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, Ningbo



China's three top tenors perform at Ningbo Cultural Plaza Poly Theatre.

[Photo by Tang Yan]

has produced over 60 prominent musicians, active in almost every genre of music and creating close to 60 "firsts" in the history of Chinese music.

What advice do these famous music artists have for Ningbo to become a "city of music"?

"We need to train more vocal teachers who can cultivate more young music talents in Ningbo." Hu Xiaoping, an accomplished Ningbo soprano singer, believes that the most important thing in vocal music education is to have good teachers who can teach by example and pass on their legacy to younger generations.

Hong Teng, a Ningbo pianist currently residing in the United States, has been active in piano education for decades. "Music is the language of the soul, the best way to express human emotions." She expressed an eagerness to contribute to the cultivation of music talents in her hometown.

Ningbo-born violinist Yu Lina has been supporting the development of music in her hometown for many years. As a professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Yu spares no effort in fostering new links between the school and Ningbo. "I am committed to the training of young violinists in Ningbo, and hope to create a more professional music learning environment for Ningbo students."

"Only through long-term persistence can music truly become an integral part of Ningbo people's everyday lives and make Ningbo a 'city of music'," Yu said.

Regarding the future of the Ningbo Symphony Orchestra, renowned conductor

Yao Guanrong believes that it must keep up with the pace of reform, learn from the best practices of other symphony orchestras, and perform more frequently at home and abroad to broaden its horizons and gain inspiration.

Yao suggests that Ningbo Symphony Orchestra open up their rehearsals to audience members before each performance, to better engage with listeners and create a more intimate experience for them.

"Ningbo has a solid foundation for music development. Now, we are at a new starting point." Jiang Mingchun, former president of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, said that becoming a "city of music" requires a city to innovate and leverage its local music culture to establish a name for itself in the world of music.

The Sound of Ningbo Spreading Far and Wide

Earlier this month, the 2021 China (Ningbo) Grand Canal International Piano Festival was held. Top pianists, music educators and young pianists from all over the world gathered in Ningbo to bring citizens a veritable feast of music.

Internationally-renowned piano master Lang Lang attended the Festival and called Ningbo a "charming city". "During my time here, we all have come to regard Ningbo as our home, and we like the city very much. We hope to bring more world-class music here, so citizens could enjoy the beauty and charm of pi-

ano music. I will also do my best to promote China's Grand Canal and Ningbo around the world!"

Notably, the Festival made fine art much more approachable for ordinary citizens through a series of events such as master classes and concerts. Many citizens were thrilled to have these opportunities to engage in conversation with the world's top artists and music educators.

Top Chinese musicians attending the Festival openly expressed their love for Ningbo and their willingness to help promote Ningbo's city image. "Ningbo is a city with a uniquely artistic DNA, abundant cultural resources, and a rich artistic atmosphere," said Zhu Yafen, Lang Lang's mentor.

The Festival was closely followed by music-lovers around the country and covered by many of China's largest media outlets.

"Organizing this event in Ningbo, a city that is deeply in love with music and has a highly-developed music industry, is of special significance. Ningbo is where the culture of Grand Canal of China intersect with the Maritime Silk Road culture," said Fang Bin, general manager of Ningbo Music Port Cultural Development Co., Ltd.

Fang stated that by building upon the success of the Festival, the Ningbo Music Port could become the engine that propels Ningbo to become a true "city of music", a platform that brings together artists and other stakeholders who could jointly shape a positive reputation for Ningbo across China and the world.



HISTORY&CULTURE

Currency Exhibition Reflects Nation's History

By Jin Lu, Liu Xiao, Sun Hui

On May 12, a special exhibition of historical Chinese currency was held in the library of Yinzhou Jiangdong Experimental Primary School. Yu Songlin, a numismatist in his 60s, explained the story behind each coin and banknote.

Yu Songlin is a resident of Dongliu subdistrict in Yinzhou district and the President of the Ningbo Ration Ticket Collectors' Association. He has been collecting coins and paper money for over 40 years. More than 250 selected pieces from his collection were displayed at the exhibition.

"These banknotes were used by the Red Army in the revolutionary base areas during the Long March in the 1930s. When the Long March ended, they were discontinued," Yu said. Through Yu's explanations, the stories of China's revolutionary forefathers, persevering in the face of daunting challenges, slowly unfolded.

Yu Songlin said that the banknotes were printed under extremely harsh circumstances. At that time, dawning paper, the main material for printing money, was very difficult to obtain, as were hemp, bamboo, bark and other substitute materials.

In fact, the pieces on display are just the tip of the iceberg of Yu's private collection, which contains over 20,000 pieces.

This is not the first time that Yu has held a currency exhibition. In 2019, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, he organized exhibitions at the Yinzhou Archives Hall and at several banks in Ningbo. Every time he acquires a new coin or banknote, Yu makes sure to unearth every bit of history behind it.

"Most of these coins and banknotes are no longer in circulation and have all but disappeared from our daily lives. I take them out and let everyone see them, hoping that people could understand more about the heroic lives of Chinese revolutionaries in the early 20th century," Yu said.

SPOTLIGHT

Conserving History and Exploring New Frontiers

By Gou Wen

The theme of International Museum Day 2021 is "The Future



Citizens participate in intangible cultural heritage activity.

[Photo by Pan Luyang]

of Museums: Recover and Reimagine". After the scourges of the COVID-19 epidemic, many new challenges await museums. If

visitors are less inclined to see exhibitions in person, what can museums do? Ningbo's museums have explored various ways to maintain their cultural influence and explore more possibilities.

Ningbo Museum is a place where the story of the city's development is preserved and told through artifacts. Items dating from ancient times to the contemporary era illustrate the history and culture of our region.

Ningbo is the birthplace of the Hemudu Neolithic Culture. One of the most iconic artifacts unearthed at the Hemudu site is the pottery eagle *Dou* (bowl). The design reflects the customs and beliefs of our primitive ancestors. The *Dou* has a decorative eagle head and tail on its rim, and one abstract "wing" on each side. The

history of porcelain-making in east Zhejiang dates back to 1600-314 BC. As techniques improved over the ages, people in east Zhejiang began producing green-glazed ceramics, or celadon, which were exported to Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and Southeast Asia as early as the 4th and 5th centuries.

In addition, Ningbo Museum's permanent exhibition "Ningbo City Memory" displays a series of historical photographs, through which visitors can find out how Moon Lake once looked and the life of Ningbo people in the last century.

A museum preserves memories of a city. However, many museums in Ningbo are not simply a space for exhibitions. They are exploring changes, making breakthroughs, devoting more re-

sources to the digitization of collections, and creating new experiences for visitors. They are at the forefront of change as they experiment with a new "hybrid" model that will reshape the value and influence of museums in the post-epidemic era.

Livestreaming is an emerging format that museums are employing to showcase their collections. On this year's International Museum Day, Ningbo Museum held a livestream event of relics from Eurasian civilizations along the Silk Road, explaining how advanced modern technology can help preserve and restore these items of great historical significance.

Meanwhile, the China Port Museum also organized its own online event: a lecture delivered

by Professor Song Xiangguang of Peking University on the future of museums. Professor Song proposed the concept of "Museum of Resilience", a new approach for museums to proactively respond to sudden and persistent disturbances from within and without.

Virtual events such as livestreaming and lectures are just some the steps taken by Ningbo's museums towards success in a new era. At the same time, they represent Ningbo's unique, creative take on the theme of International Museum Day 2021.

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